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OUTLOOK NOTES

“WE are never at our ease,” says Charles Lamb, “in the presence of a schoolmaster, because we know he is not at his ease in ours. He comes like Gulliver from among his little people, and he cannot fit the stature of his understanding to yours. He is so used to teaching that he wants to be teaching you.” This is not as near the truth today as it was when Lamb wrote it, but there is still truth in it. Teachers are bound to spend much if not most of their lives with boys and girls. More than any other class, therefore, they need the stimulus and the culture which comes from social intercourse with equals. Teachers’ meetings of one kind and another always “talk shop.” In small communities teachers generally can and perhaps generally do identify themselves quite fully with the regular social activities of the people. In large cities this is not so easy; here they lack a distinct social position and are not recognized as a definite social force. For the final success of the campaign to secure full public acceptance of the professional status of the teacher such social recognition will contribute more than any other one thing.

It was, therefore, an epoch-marking event when the women teachers of Buffalo banded themselves together and purchased a chapter house of their own, a beautiful one, too, located in the best part of the city and especially adapted to club and social purposes. It cost some \$12,000, of which in less than a year over \$4000 has been paid. During the July meeting of the N. E. A. this chapter house was the scene of several delightful receptions. From talks with citizens it was evident that the purchase of the chapter house had placed the women teachers in a new light before the city. Their entertainments are notable functions, worthy of much attention in the society columns of the newspapers. The example set in Buffalo is probably soon

to be followed in Chicago. The women teachers of Buffalo are to be congratulated on their pioneer work, the success of which ought to inspire imitation in every city in the United States of as many as 25,000 inhabitants.

THERE are undoubtedly more and larger teachers' organizations in the United States than in any other country in the world. Probably there are too many of them; at least it is hard to see what good purpose some of them subserve. The trouble is most of them have not any clear purpose at all. In Germany, where all teachers must have been professionally trained, teachers' meetings discuss questions of scholarship; in England the organization of teachers is much the same as a trade union; in the United States neither of these features is prominent, and meetings generally discuss questions of method almost exclusively. Professor Kelsey elsewhere in this number ably advocates the introduction of questions of scholarship into the programmes of teachers' meetings; undoubtedly this must be done if the best minds are to be attracted to these meetings. But the present chaos of teachers' gatherings, with vague and undefined purposes, needs to be resolved into a cosmos. The work must be clearly differentiated, and this, with our numerous meetings, should be no herculean labor. Each of the three features, scholarship, method, business, must be treated in its proper place, but not all of them at each meeting. If, for example, the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools fills its programme with such topics as: The best method of teaching history, Should Vergil precede Cicero or Cicero precede Vergil? Should a lesson in Vergil cover fifteen lines or fifty?—why, these are questions which could and should be and are discussed in other meetings, and it is a sheer waste of opportunity for the delegates to this meeting to spend their time on them. Such a meeting ought to be exclusively concerned with the broad questions of organization and legislation which are all the time pressing for solution. It ought to be a business meeting; it ought, further, to do

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business and not to talk it over merely. The ultimate solution of many questions is to be found only in legislation, a fact which teachers as a class either do not appreciate or are afraid to face. It is the business of this and similar organizations of teachers to face this fact and to work for the legal redress of wrongs which the law permits or sanctions. State teachers' associations especially have this specific duty resting upon them. When the New York legislature proposed to pass a bill unfavorable to bicyclists the L. A. W. very promptly and energetically brought all its influence to bear in opposition, and the bill did not pass. If any legislature contemplating the passage of a bill hostile to the best interests of schools or of teachers could be confronted with the business-like opposition of an organization representing all the teachers in the state a good many bills that now become laws would never reach the governor. Now, too, a teacher can be wronged with practical impunity. Instances of injustice towards teachers are as common as sunrise, but cases where teachers obtain redress are more rare than the aurora borealis. Here, again, the bicyclists are better off, for if a member of the L. A. W. is imposed upon or denied his legal rights his case will be taken up and fought for him by a powerful organization which bears all the expense. If we have a lesson to learn from Germany in the direction of making our teachers' meetings more scholarly, have we not, too, to learn from England the lesson that teachers' organizations can and should interest themselves in securing the passage of good school legislation, in preventing the passage of bad school legislation, and in self-protection? These things teachers can do, not by discussion and the adoption of good sets of resolutions, but by organization and, especially, by action along practical business lines.

C. H. THURBER